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Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-04

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /005 R

66664
DRATED BY: NEA/ ARP: BWRAMPELMEIER
APPROVED BY: NEA/ ARP: FMDICKMAN
---------- 050207
R 290027 Z MAR 73
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

S E C R E T STATE 057778

FOLL SENT ACTION SECSTATE SECDEF INFO CINCEUR DHAHRAN USAFE CSAF FROM JIDDA 26 MAR 73 REPEATED TO YOU QUOTE

S E C R E T JIDDA 1216

SECDEF FOR ISA

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, SA
SUBJ: MODA REQUESTS FOR ROYAL SAUDI AIR FORCE MUNITIONS

REF: JIDDA 1187

SUMMARY: FOLLOWING WUDAY' AH INCIDENT, ACTING MODA PRINCE TURKI INFORMED AMBASSADOR THAT SAUDI ARABIA HAD NO INTENTION OF ATTACKING ANYONE, NOR OF USING F-5 AIRCRAFT FOR SUCH PURPOSE. SAG HOPES, HOWEVER, THAT DELIVERY OF F-5 ARMAMENTS (SEPTEL) COULD BE EXPEDITED. MODA ALSO REQUEST US ARMY RECOMMENDATIONS RE MOBILE RADARS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. SAUDI REQUEST FOR F-5 EQUIPMENT APPEARS TO US REASONABLE ATTEMPT TO STRENGTHEN WEAPONS SYSTEM ON WHICH THEY EXPECT TO RELY IN FUTURE. END SUMMARY.

1. SAYING THAT I MUST BE AWARE OF WHAT HAD RECENTLY TAKEN PLACE ON SOURTERN BORDER, ACTING DEFENSE MINISTER PRINCE TURKI INFORMED ME MARCH 25 THAT SAUDI ARABIA CONSIDERED THE EVENT A " RATHER TRIVIAL ONE." NEVERTHELESS IT RAISED
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QUESTIONS CONCERNING COMPLETENESS OF PRESENT SAUDI DEFENSE POSTURE. HE WISHED ASSURE ME SAUDI ARABIA HAD NO INTENTION

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OF ATTACKING ANYONE, NOR OF USING ITS F-5 AIRCRAFT FOR SUCH PURPOSES. HOWEVER, F-5' S, WITH GREATER RANGE THAN LIGHTNINGS, SHOULD BE ARMED AND READY IF NEEDED.

2. MARCH 24 PRINCE SULTAN HAD RETURNED FROM HIS TRIP TO OMAN AND HAD CONSULTED WITH KING FAISAL. (SULTAN HAS SINCE DEPARTED FOR BAHRAIN TO CONTINUE HIS PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED VISIT THERE.) KING, TURKI SAID, HAD BEEN DISTURBED TO LEARN THAT F-5' S NOW ARMED ONLY WITH " AIR- TO- AIR ROCKETS" AND HAVE NO AIR- TO- SURFACE ROCKETS NOR MUCH ELSE.

3. ACCORDINGLY, KING HAD DIRECTED THAT AMBASSADOR BE SUMMONED AND REQUESTED MOVE MOST EXPEDITIOUSLY TO OBTAIN MORE ARMAMENT FOR F-5' S. IT ISSREALIZED THERE IS ALREADY IN EXISTENCE PROGRAM FOR PROCUREMENT OF THIS ORDNANCE IN FUTURE, BUT IT IS REQUIRED NOW MOST URGENTLY. SAUDI GOVT HOPES THEREFORE EVERY POSSIBLE SOURCE, WHETHER IN EUROPE, SE ASIA, OR US WILL BE INVESTIGATED. POSSIBILITY BORROWING SOME FROM IRAN MIGHT BE LOOKED INTO. SAUDIS MIGHT SEND THEIR OWN AIRCRAFT (C-130' S) TO PICK UP ORDANANCE. SAG WOULD BE PREPARED PAY ALL COSTS.

4. TURKI REFERRED TO LIST HE HANDED ME AS CONSTITUTING URGENT SAUDI REQUIREMENTS (SEE SEPTEL). HE MENTIONED ONCE MORE WARM HOPE OF KING AND DEFENSE MINISTER PRINCE SULTAN THAT " OUR ALLY, THE USG", CAN MOVE MOST URGENTLY AND PROMPTLY TO ASSIST. SAUDI ARABIA NEEDED BE FULLY READY DEMONSTRATE ITS STRENGTH SHOULD FURTHER THREATENING CIRCUMSTANCES ARISE.

5. REPLIED I WOULD, OF COURSE, PASS ON REQUEST TO WASHINGTON SAG' S URGENT HOPE THAT ALL POSSIBLE BE DONE TO EXPEDITE. TURKI ASKED IF I COULD GIVE HIM AN ESTIMATE AS TO WHEN AN ANSWER WOULD BE FORTHCOMING. I TOLD HIM MY TOTAL LACK OF FAMILIARITY WITH THESE MATTERS MADE IT IMPRACTICAL FOR ME TO EVEN GUESS.

6. TURKI THEN TURNED TO QUESTION OF MOBILE RADARS. AS I KNEW, A US ARMY TEAM HAD RECENTLY BEEN IN SAUDI ARABIA STUDYING SAUDI REQUIREMENTS. IT WAS EXPECTED TO RETURN ABOUT MAY 1. HERE AGAIN RECENT EVENTS MADE GETTING THESE UNITS INTO OPER-

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ATION, PARTICULARLY THE ONE WHICH WOULD BE STATIONED NEAR NEJRAN, A MATTER OF URGENCY. INSTALLATION OX RADAR WOULD PREVENT OCCURRENCES SUCH AS ONE QTAT HAD JUST TAKEN PLACE AT WADIA. TURKI HOPED TEAM WITH ITS RECOMMENDATIONS COULD RETURN BEFORE EARLY MAY AND AS SOON AS IT COULD. I SAID I WOULD INFORM APPROPRIATE QUARTERS OF HRH' S INTEREST IN PROMPT ACTION.

7. FINALLY PRINCE TURKI SAID NORTHROP SHOULD BE SPOKEN TO

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ABOUT POSSIBILITY HAVING " SOME MAINTENANCE AND READINESS"
CREWS LOCATED " IN THE SOUTH." (TURKI DID NOT INDICATE
WHETHER MAINATENANCE TEAMS WOULD BE REQUIRED AT KHAMIS
MUSHAYT, NEJRAN OR WADIA. WE WOULD GUESS HE MEANS THE FIRST
NAMED.)

8. I REPLIED I COULD ENVISAGE SUCH A MOVE RAISING
PROBLEMS, EQUIPMENT AND PERSONNEL WOULD HAVE TO BE
MOVED. I WOULD LOOK INTO IT BUT COULD MAKE NO COMMIT-
MENTS. TURKI ASSERTED THAT SUCH AVAILABILITY WAS
PROVIDED FOR UNDER CONTRACT.

9. TURKI CLOSED HIS PLEASE FOR OUR HELP BY SOME
EMPHATIC REMARKS ABOUT DEGREE TO WHICH SAG DEPENDES ON
US AS ITS MOST RELIABLE FRIEND, THE CONCURRENCE OF OUR
INTERESTS IN MIDDLE EAST AND DEEP CONCERN OF HIS MAJESTY
WITH REGARD TO EQUIPPING F-5' S AS PROMPTLY AS POSSIBLE
WITH FULL RANGE OF ARMAMENTS.

10. COMMENT: SEPTEL GIVES LIST OF MUNITIONS WHOSE
DELIVERY SAUDIS WANT EXPEDITED AND ANOTHER MESSAGE
FOLLOWING GIVES INTERPRETTIVE REMARKS BY PRINCE TURKI RE
ATTACK ON WADIA AND SITUATION ON IRQAI BORDER. HE FOUND
OCCASION ASSURE ME TWO OR THREE TIMES SAUDI ARABIA WOULD
ACT ONLY IN ITS OWN DEFENSE.

11. AS DEPT AWARE, PDRY IS SAUDIS' PARTICULAR
BETE NOIRE AND ANY MOVES FROM THAT DIRECTION REVIVE
MEMORIES OF 1969 FLARE- UP AT WADIA. F-86' S, AVAILABLE THREE AND
HALF YEARS AGO, ARE NOW IN EFFECT NO LONGER OPERABLE.
LIGHTNING OPERATIONAL RATE TENDS TO BE ERRATIC AND PLANE
IS NOT VERY EFFECTIVE IN GROUND SUPPORT ROLE.
THUS, SAUDI REQUEST FOR EQUIPMENT FOR F-5' S SEEMS
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REASONABLE ATTEMPT STRENGTHEN THAT PART OF AIR ARM ON
WHICH THEY EXPECT DEPEND MOST HEAVILY IN FUTURE.
CHARACTERISTICALLY SAUDIS (WHO HAVE DALLIED IN ORDERING
F-5 ARMAMENTS HITHERTO) ARE PULLING OUT ALL STOPS TO
GET URGENT ASSISTANCE FROM USG.

12. EMBASSY HAS LIMITED KNOWLEDGE PRACTICALITY TURKI' S
REQUEST AND WE ASKING USMTM PROVIDE US THEIR COMMENTS ON
LIST GIVEN US. BUT BASED ON FACTS PRESENTLY AVAILABLE,
WE THINK SOME POSITIVE USG ACTION TO GET FAIR PORTION OF
MUNITIONS DESIRED OUT HERE AS PROMPTLY AS POSSIBLE (OR
ARRANGE FOR SAUDIS COME AND PICK THEM UP) WOULD PAY US
SOME SUBSTANTIAL DIVIDENDS IN GOOD WILL AND IN STRENGTHEN-
ING KING FAISAL' S SENSE RELIABILITY AND IMPORTANCE OF
TIES AND FRIENDSHIP WITH US. WITH CURRENT UPSURGE IN
ME PRE- OCCUPATION WITH ARAB- ISRAEL, SAUDIS ARE AGAIN

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GRUMBLING THAT OUR POLICIES TOWARD ISRAEL ARE EMBARRASS-
MENT TO SAG BECAUSE OF ITS CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH USG.
FAVORABLE RESPONSE TO MUNITIONS REQUEST WOULD REMIND
THEM HOW VERY VALUABLE THAT ASSOCIATION IS.

13. WE HOPE, THEREFORE, DOD AND USAF MAY FIND IT
PRACTICABLE TO RESPOND WITH EARLY DELIVERLY OF SOME OF
ITEMS REQUESTED.
THACHER UNQUOTE ROGERS

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